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occur where another vowel follows), as well as in many other cases in ordinary speech, including a great variety of derivative or inflectional suffixes. (See VIETOR'S 'German Pronunciation,' p. 71.) It apparently did not seem essential to Prof. OTIS, within the limitation of his introductory manual, to include the conversational modifications of pronunciation, or to introduce the minor variations in vowels and consonants or the technical vocabulary of scientific grammar; and his editor accordingly preferred to leave that field open for the teacher to cultivate at will. For a text-book implies a teacher; and is not pronunciation to be taught less by description than by personal illustration?

H. S. WHITE.

Cornell University.

[While it is gladly conceded that the writer of a text-book must himself define the limitations of it, it seemed that a manual which is largely made up of conversational matter and devotes about sixty pages to *Sprechübungen*, would be improved by a clearer and more accurate description of German sounds. Surely the time to teach a correct pronunciation is in the beginning of the course; and since it is also believed to be true that a large number of teachers of German who have not had the benefits of a superior training for their work, are in nothing at a greater disadvantage than in the matter of pronunciation, it follows with much force that even introductory manuals should encourage them by all means to treat this matter as seriously as possible.

H. C. G. v. J.]

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Permit me to take a modest exception to what is said in your last number under the caption "Materiam superabat opus,"—not to what the writer doubtless means, but to what he might be thought to mean.

One needs always to keep clear in his mind the distinction between transitional standards and ultimate standards. As every one understands, intellectual progress is still made on the old-fashioned principle of "tacking," and while every tack must have its axioms, arguments, aphorisms and aims, the voyage has quite different ones.

To call proper attention to the value of artistic treatment it is well, at the right junctures, to commend and to imitate works in which the technique is superior to the subject; but who can look upon this extreme as any way preferable to the opposite? At every exhibition of paintings one sees insignificant, contemptible or even repulsive objects represented with marvellous skill. A little of this is no doubt helpful, but to pursue it as the ultimate ideal would end—would it not?—in belittling the artists and destroying their art.

Consider for a moment the case that is cited—Iago. Were Iago the centre and *raison d'être* of the play, it might indeed be said "materiam superabat opus," but, as our writer himself points out, Iago is not the hero. He is one of the characters contributing to the whole, and that whole is great and valuable.

This leads to the conclusion, in which no doubt on second, if not on first, thought all will unite: When the tendency is to prize technique too highly let us cry out against "carving cherrystones"; when art is not sufficiently studied let us preach from this text of OVID, but all the time we will keep clearly in mind another watch-word,—*a worthy subject worthily treated*.

JUSTIN H. SMITH.

Boston.

### CORRECTION.

In column 97, vol. v. of MOD. LANG. NOTES, after l. 15 from bottom, read "In Gothic we have such double forms as *gaurs* and *kaurs*, *raginon* and *reikinon*, like the Latin *Gaius* and *Caius*."

In the March no. of the current volume, col. 143, l. 87 (note): for *tum* read *tun*; col. 144, l. 152 (note) for *macecuer* read *macecrier*; col. 145, l. 188 (note) for *cneowunn* read *cneowum*; col. 148, l. 298 (note) for *weintenez* read *meintenez*; col. 150, l. 388 (note) for *pri* read *pris*; col. 147, l. 226, for *lu* read *lui*.

### BRIEF MENTION.

The American Dialect Society has issued the first instalment of its publications with the title, "Dialect Notes, Part I.," copies of which

can be obtained at a nominal price (fifty cents each) of the secretary, Professor E. S. SHELDON, Cambridge, Mass., or of Messrs. D. C. HEATH & Co., Boston. This brochure should enlist the interest of all scientific students of our language. It sets forth the aim and methods of an organization devoted to the careful observation and study of the English language in this country, and reports the beginning already made in this subject in the brief history of this society. No one that has been trained to the careful observation of speech should withhold his help and support from this the first combined effort of scholars to secure trustworthy *data* for the proper treatment of the diverse phenomena of English speech in America.

Professor E. BOURCIEZ, Maître de Conférences à la Faculté des Lettres de Bordeaux, has lately published an excellent 'Précis de Phonétique française ou exposé des lois qui régissent la transformation des mots latins en français,' which may be recommended to beginners or those who desire to have in succinct and well arranged form a systematic and easily consultable statement of the subject. The little book is quite on a level with the latest investigation, and any one who will have thoroughly mastered its contents, (120 duodecimo pages), together, say, with HORNING's treatment of the same subject in BARTSCH and HORNING's 'La Langue et la Littérature françaises,' will be well prepared to proceed to the more complicated branches of French phonetics (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1889).

A book of less specializing character is 'De Dante à l'Arétin: La Société italienne de la Renaissance' by LEFEBVRE SAINT-OGAN (Paris, Maisson Quantin, 1889). In a series of twelve chapters averaging some thirty pages each it treats of such subjects as "Le Caractère national," "La Religion," "La Tyrannie," "L'Humanisme et les Lettres," "La Vie de Cour," "La Famille et l'Education," "Les Femmes" etc., etc. They are pleasantly and intelligently written and throw many sidelights upon that all-important period—lights such as are not usually cast by the ordinarily

studied literature and history of the time. There is room for more books on this subject in relation to the period in question.

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#### PERSONAL.

Mr. HENRY R. LANG, of the Friends' School, Providence, R. I., a frequent contributor to MOD. LANG. NOTES, to the *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, and to GRÖBER's *Zeitschrift f. rom. Philologie*, is spending a year on leave of absence in Europe, and is at present engaged in the study of early Portuguese at Lisbon. At the request of Prof. GRÖBER, Mr. LANG has recently undertaken the preparation of the 'Portugiesische Grammatik' in the "Sammlung romanischer Grammatiken" projected several years ago by the Gebrüder Henninger of Heilbronn. Only one of the grammars in the collection has as yet appeared: TH. GARTNER's excellent 'Raeto-romanische Grammatik' (1883); but the 'Italienische Grammatik', by Prof. W. MEYER (who, by the way, has just been called to the University of Vienna) will soon be ready for publication. The Spanish Grammar of the series is in the hands of Prof. J. CORNU of Graz, who so ably treated the subject of Portuguese in GRÖBER's 'Grundriss'; and the French Grammar has from the beginning of the enterprise been entrusted to Prof. FRITZ NEUMANN of Freiburg i. B., Associate Editor of the *Litteraturblatt f. rom. u. germ. Philologie*. It may be added that the Gebrüder Henninger have lately sold their establishment to Reishaupt in Leipsic.

We are asked to state that Professor A. DE ROUEMONT, author of the pleasing little work, 'La France', (cf. MOD. LANG. NOTES, vol. i, p. 126) has not been connected with the editorial management of *Le Français* since July, 1889.

Dr. GEORGE HEMPL (University of Michigan) has arranged with Dr. FURNIVALL to prepare for the Early English Text Society the first complete edition of BYRHTEFERTH'S 'Handboc of Gerimcraft, or Manual of Calendariology,' with a grammatical introduction, and a full glossarial index.